Modernisation of Railway Systems/Projects

334. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Railways have been unable to mdodernise their various projects/schemes, particularly signalling systems;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have drawn up any time-bound scheme to modernise various projects/schemes, etc; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) Upgradation of technology and modernisation of railways including the signalling system is a continuous and need based exercise which takes into account the availability of resources and requirements of the system for upgrading its services and for ensuring better safety standards. While modern technology in the form of track circuiting, Auxiliary Warning System (AWS), mobile communication between guard and driver, mechanized maintenance of track, provision of route-relay-interlocking/solid-state-interlocking, safety devices at level crossings, centralised traffic control, Train Describer Systems, high powered diesel and electric locomotives, high axle load wagons, modern track etc. has been inducted on the Indian Railways, investments in upgradation of human resources in the form of training of operation and maintenace staff using modern and better training facilities like simulators etc. are also undertaken concurrently. These measures are expected to help in modernising and in bringing about further improvements in the operating and safety standards of the Railways.

Resource constraints do, however, exist. Efforts continue to be made with the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance in this regard. In order to further augment the availability of funds, increased emphasis is being laid on revenue generation through better marketing efforts, private sector participation in Railway Projects and through other innovative measures like commercial exploitation of

land and airspace, leasing of communication channels etc. Efforts are also being made to effect reduction in expenditure to improve the finances of the Railways.

Rakesh Mohan Committee Report of Restructuring of Railways

335. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would carefully consider the recommendations of Rakesh Mohan Committee Report on restructuring of Railways particularly bifurction of Railways by separating operations and policy making functions and immediate privatisation of non-core railway activities like workshop and production units;

(b) if so, the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Union Government for strengthening the functioning of Railways, by making it conducive to private investment; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) An Interim Executive Summary of the report has been received on 17.2.2001. The final report is still awaited.

(b) and (c) The following Schemes have been launched or are under finalisation by the Government to attract private sector investment into the Railways:—

1. OYWS (Own Your Wagon Scheme).
2. A revised, investor-friendly BOT (Build Own and Transfer) Scheme.
3. Catering and Tourism Corporation.
4. RAILTEL Corporation.
5. Participation in Gauge Conversion, New Line and Rail infrastructure development Projects.

An advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Sam